

keep only the head, a wing and a foot, which I sent to the Shooting Times, London, who forwarded them to the British Museum (Natural History). Mr. R. W. Sims of the Bird section wrote to me, "The bird appears to be of the eastern race, *Aythya nyroca baeri*; this is probably a first record from the Punjab". In reply to a further query by me, he replied, "The words 'the bird appears to be' are used because

identification rests on only the head. It is therefore remotely possible that, occasionally, birds of the western race can be atypically pigmented. Personally I feel that there is little doubt that your bird is of the eastern race".

December 3, 1986.

HAIDER JANG

### 7. AN INTERESTING COLOUR PHASE OF THE LESSER GOLDENBACKED WOODPECKER (*DINOPIUM BENGHALENSE*)

On 29th September 1986, Vijay Shrimali spotted a strange woodpecker and as happens regularly, most of the staff of the Centre for Environment Education, from the Director down were out in the Centre's garden looking at the new bird! It was a Goldenbacked Woodpecker but with a difference: the entire body, apart from a light golden back and a crimson crest, was white with a light creamy tint. The crimson crest indicated the bird was a male. The

bird was spectacularly beautiful and was not an albino as proved by the golden back, crimson crest and dark eyes. Later the unusual bird was shown to Shree Shivraj Kumar Khacher and he was able to watch it at eye level on a tree trunk at a distance of less than 3 meters!

October 4, 1986.

LAVKUMAR KHACHER

### 8. UNUSUAL FEEDING BEHAVIOUR IN THE ADJUTANT STORK *LEPTOPTILOS DUBIUS* (GMELIN)

On the morning of 8th January 1986 at about 0800 hrs., we came across an Adjutant Stork swallowing large pieces of vertebral column at a garbage dump at Tezpur (Sonitpur district) in Assam.

The garbage dump being a major site for the town's waste matter disposal is regularly frequented by 3 species of vultures (*Gyps benghalensis*, *Gyps indicus*, *Gyps fulvus*), Pariah Kite, (*Milvus migrans govinda*) and Adjutant Stork (*Leptoptilos dubius*). During one such observation on these birds we came across an unusual feeding behaviour of the Adjutant Stork. The stork was trying to swallow pieces of vertebral column as also some offal. Initially the stork picked up one of the pieces and tried swallowing it. This piece measured not less than 30 cm in length and belonged to a buffalo calf. This was confirmed by regular visits. In spite of the size of the

vertebral column the stork successfully managed to swallow the piece after a lot of effort. The whole operation was repeated 5 minutes later by the same bird when another piece (about the same size as the first) was swallowed. About 10 minutes before this incident the same adjutant stork was seen feeding on a carcass along with 110 Whitebacked vultures, 4 Longbilled vultures, 4 Fulvous Griffon vultures and 7 Adjutant Storks.

Fishes, frogs, reptiles, crustaceans and carrion form the major food of this stork (Ali and Ripley 1983). Panday (1974) has reported the swallowing of maimed ducks by Adjutant Storks.

May 2, 1987.

PRAKASH RAO  
S. MURLIDHARAN

#### REFERENCES

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